

Japan's Asahi debuts yeast-based milk alternative using SIG aseptic packaging

15 December 2025 | News

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Asahi Group Japan has launched LIKE MILK, the country's first yeast-based beverage with milk-like characteristics. The product is packaged in SIG SmallBloc aseptic cartons and filled using the SIG Small 12 Aseptic filling machine, a high-output, flexible filling solution from SIG. LIKE MILK is currently in test sales in selected Japanese supermarkets and e-commerce channels, with plans to expand distribution by 2026. The launch marks the first step of the partnership between Asahi Group Japan and SIG.

Filled by co-packer Mori Milk, the debut of LIKE MILK represents Asahi's first commercial product in partnership with SIG. "Through LIKE MILK, we aim to help realise a society that embraces food diversity, where everyone can freely enjoy food regardless of physical conditions such as allergies, ethical beliefs, or preferences for non-dairy or health-conscious choices. Unlike traditional dairy alternatives made from soy, oats, or nuts, LIKE MILK is yeast-based and developed using Asahi Group's proprietary yeast technology. The result is a beverage containing levels of protein and calcium comparable to cow milk, yet free from milk components and the 28 specified allergenic ingredients. This makes it ideal for health-conscious consumers and people dealing with dietary restrictions," said Tomohiro Hata, Senior Manager, Future Creation Headquarters Department at Asahi Group Japan.

“Our LIKE MILK product was brought to market quickly and with the highest quality thanks to SIG’s flexible filling technology and co-packing network. As consumer demands continue to diversify, including growing health consciousness and sustainability awareness, agility in product development and packaging has become critically important.”

Central to the launch is the SIG Small 12 Aseptic – a highly flexible filling machine capable of supporting two carton formats, SIG SmallBloc and SIG SmallFit, and handling up to 16 aseptic carton variants, including various volumes plus closure and straw solutions on a single filling system. With an output of 12,000 packs per hour, the filling line enables beverage manufacturers to accelerate product development, speed up time-to-market, and respond quickly to consumer trends. Its ability to switch between volumes and formats in just a few minutes while maintaining high output enables brands to keep pace with consumer preferences and reduce time-to-market.